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A Signature Proposal for Complete Audiovisual Productions and Services RFP N1143080021
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Criteria D - Comprehensive Plan – Signature Communications

I. **Knowledge of fundamental audiovisual planning, development and production**

In order to show you this, we would describe a production from the beginning to end. However, on pages 10 through 20 in the RFP in the section called "**National Park Service Standard Specifications for Audiovisual Production and Multimedia Planning, Design and Production Services with Installation Harpers Ferry Center**" does an excellent job of describing the way we approach our work. We are including it as part of our proposal at the end of this section, and this inclusion indicates our full commitment to these standards.

Our knowledge in this field has been honed in over 25 years of film, video and audio production, primarily with a focus on educational, documentary and exhibition media. The awards and resumes of our people, as well as the samples submitted, attest to this knowledge and experience of the fundamentals of our business. So will the clients who we have offered as references. Every year and every production adds to this knowledge. We never begin a project without a team discussion of how it can be made special creatively, what work flow considerations apply or need to be adapted, what software and hardware technologies are appropriate to bring into play. We never walk away from a production without analyzing as a team what we have learned and what opportunities there are for improvement. And we include the client in these discussions.

Knowledge in any field is cumulative and evolving – not a static thing. We are constantly taking advantage of seminars and training for both the newer members of our staff and the old dogs as well. Over the past 12 months we have had an experienced HD editor and colorist on site to train editors and producers on evolving technologies and work flow in the world of High Definition, we have sent editors and assistant editors to graphics seminars in Photoshop, After Effects and advanced non-linear editing.

The result is that we do not view our "knowledge of fundamental audiovisual planning, development and production" as an existing state, but rather as an evolving process. We don't stand on our laurels gained in 25 years of production experience. Our awards, samples and clients will attest to our application of that "knowledge" in years past. Our commitment to your "Service Standard Specifications" is your promise that this knowledge will continue to grow in the future.

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II. Confirmation of the full range of capabilities required to perform the work

We do confirm that we have the full range of capabilities to perform the work. This is evident in the resumes of our personnel and in the following list of equipment. Any hardware or software that we do not possess in-house, we know the sources for, and the rates for such are including in our pricing proposal.

Signature Communications Equipment:

Production:

Film

Aaton 16mm & Super 16mm
Aaton XTR, in-camera time code and two - 400' magazines
Chrosziel Matte Box & Follow Focus
Lenses - Cooke 9-50mm, Angenieux, HEC 10-150mm, 300 & 600 mm Primes, Set of Zeiss Superspeeds
Sachtler Tripod & fluid heads with baby legs and high hat
Fostex PD-4 DAT Recorder with time code
Complete Audio package with wireless microphone
Video Assist with monitor & VHS

Aaton X-Prod 16 or Super 16mm
Sony BVW-D600 BetaSP Camera
Sony PD100A Mini DV Camera with all support gear
Matt Box, tripods, lights
Access to Sony 900 24P High Definition Camera

Standard Definition Video:

Sony BVP90/BVV5 Broadcast Camera
4x4 Matte Box & Filters
Sachtler Tripod with fluid head, baby legs, high hat & Sachtler Dolly wheels
Complete Audio Package with wireless microphone
Sony 8021 High Resolution Monitor

Sony BVW-D600 BetaSP Camera
Portable Arri Softbank, 1 light kit
Fujinon 16 X 9.5 zoon lens
Fujinon A8 .5 X 5.5 Brm 5.5-47mm wide angle lens
Sony PVM 8045Q Field Monitor

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Sachtler tripod with fluid head
Matte box with assorted filters
Small grip package

Sony DVW-700 Digi Betacam

High Definition Video:

Sony EX3 XDCAM

Panasonic Camera AG-HVX200
Schneider HD 2x Teleconverter
Century .6X Wide angle adapter
2 P2 Memory Card and one hard drive
HD Field Monitor
Battery Pack and charger
Sachtler tripod with fluid head
On-camera shotgun mike
Zoom/Focus/Iris controller
Mattebox kit and DV kit

Extensive lighting gear including Chimera, Light Banks, Tweenie, Betweenie, 2K Softlight, 1K open faced instruments and C-stands

Post Production – Standard Definition:

Avid Media Composer – Avid Mojo uncompressed

Avid Media Composer 9000 XL Meridian 3
ICE Graphics Accelerator
Hardware Multi-cam
(9 cameras real time)

Avid Media Composer 1000 Off Line System
(AVR 77)
3 D Hardware / Software

Betacam source/record decks
Sony DVCam Source/record decks

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High Definition Post Production:

Avid Media Composer Adrenaline HD v2.x System
1 Uncompressed Video
Real-time 3D-dve
Intraframe editing

Adobe Photoshop
Adobe After Effects Production Bundle 7.0 Professional
India Pro Animation & Graphics Program

Somerset Group Equipment and Software

Somerset Group owns and uses a wide variety of state-of-the-art computer hardware and associated support peripherals including CD-ROM and DVD authoring tools, scanners, printers, touch screens and media storage devices. The company maintains a variety of Microsoft Windows operating system platforms, allowing for testing of CD-ROMs and websites on a realistic spectrum of hardware platforms and configurations. Somerset Group also uses a variety of Apple Macintosh systems for production, graphics development and testing purposes. The Somerset Group computer environment is an integrated cross platform production environment seamlessly transferring files between both types of operating systems to ensure cross platform functionality.

Somerset Group employs a variety of data storage and back-up systems to maintain, store and archive files. All data is backed up onto DAT digital storage tape on a daily basis. These tapes are stored off site and retained for up to one calendar year. All production graphic files, custom developed software and other important data files are permanently archived to CD-ROM or DVD and cataloged.

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Somerset Group uses a wide variety of software to develop its multimedia projects. Most graphic design and multimedia programming is done using the Adobe comprehensive suite of products. Specifically we own and use:

Director 11

Flash CS3 Professional

Photoshop CS3

Illustrator CS3

Dreamweaver CS3

Acrobat 8 Professional

After Effects CS3 Professional

Final Cut Pro

Maya

Fireworks CS3

InDesign CS3

Corel Draw

III. How you will ensure quality, timeliness, effectiveness of the finished programs.

Quality
1. Signature works with people – both staff and subcontractors - who have demonstrated quality in their approach as evidenced by prior work, awards won, attention to detail, and the willingness to "go the extra step" to assure quality.

2. We do not skimp on production supplies but use new and good quality supplies.

3. In the field we now have a policy to check the material that is shot on a daily basis. We well know that discovering flaws in the edit suite is an expensive matter.

4. We have many internal reviews before sending a production to our client. Often we have advisors look at the material too.

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5. Signature has a policy that nothing goes out of our door unless it has been quality checked – regardless of whether it is a first draft script, rough cut, or deliverable master.

6. We have described above our approach for analyzing a project before it happens and once it is done. The first leads to quality, timeliness and effectiveness in the project at hand. The second ensures those qualities in projects to come.

Timeliness

1. As for timeliness, any schedule committed to in a contract for a job has been reviewed by all involved in that project – from researcher to producer to editor. The National Park Service has been good in allowing us to recommend the schedule that is most reasonable for the producers as well as for the client. From that point on, there need be no cracking of whips to meet schedules since the creation of that schedule has been a mutual process. Using Google Calendar, everyone involved in a project is instantaneously updated as to changes in schedule. Unexpected eventualities always enter in to affect a project's schedule. Because we understand that contract modifications are a solution of last resort, we have made a point of open and constant communication with the COR.

2. In addition, we conduct weekly meetings to go over the status of our projects.

3. Internal deadlines are set earlier than the date of submission so we can have time to make any corrections if needed.

4. A Follow Up file is maintained and checked to keep us aware of deadlines.

Effectiveness

1. On our National Park Service work we collaborate with the COR and the park in the planning phase writing treatments and scripts that meet with their needs and accomplish the park's themes goals, and objectives.

2. We work with advisors who review the treatments, scripts and edits for accuracy and effectiveness.

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3. In some cases we have audience-tested the program to ensure effectiveness and made changes based on their feedback. We well understand that accuracy in historical, geological or cultural facts is not the only road to effectiveness of a project. Reaching the audience effectively is an equally important goal.

IV. Describe how you will effectively manage projects involving subcontractors.

1. Signature has developed **Standards of Performance** which is used to evaluate employees, annually. (We have included them for your review). New employees are put on a six month probation period. We discuss their job responsibilities, write a job description and go over the Standards of Performance.   If there are problems in any area we discuss them as they happen, document the discussion in the employee file, set goals for correction, and another evaluation in a given time frame. If the problem continues to occur, we terminate employment. Each year, on the anniversary date, employees are evaluated against the standards. We take this opportunity to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and to see if there are any ways that they would like to develop their skills and experience and how we can facilitate that. The evaluation includes any comments that have been offered by clients.

2. We take a similar approach with our subcontractors. First a contract is made defining the work, price, schedule, and reporting relationship.

3. Our Standards of Performance are reviewed. If problems occur, we will discuss them immediately and chart a course to fix them.

Communication and review ensure quality timeliness and effectiveness of our productions